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**WEST BRICK SCHOOL, OAKHAM, APPROVED FOR NOMINATION TO THE NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES**

Secretary of the Commonwealth William Francis Galvin is pleased to announce that the Massachusetts Historical Commission approved the West Brick School in Oakham for nomination to the National Register of Historic Places at its December 8, 2010, meeting. The nomination will be submitted to the National Register of Historic Places at the National Park Service in Washington, DC, for final consideration and designation.

“The Massachusetts Historical Commission is dedicated to preserving the Commonwealth’s rich architectural, cultural, archaeological, and historic resources,” Secretary Galvin said. “Inclusion of the West Brick School in the National Register will be the first such listing for the town and will recognize this important part of Oakham’s past.”

West Brick School, located at 1592 Old Turnpike Road in Oakham, is a small, Federal period, one-room schoolhouse, built of handmade red brick. Brick was rare, and considered a sign of refinement, in early 19<sup>th</sup>-century Central Massachusetts; most schools of this period were of wood-frame construction, which makes West Brick School’s construction outstanding among Oakham’s 19<sup>th</sup>-century schools. The oldest surviving school building in Oakham, West Brick School is a remarkably well-preserved example of a 19<sup>th</sup>-century one-room schoolhouse, as well as a fine example of Federal-style vernacular architecture. Built around 1827, the building served as a school until 1920, after which it took on new life as a rustic vacation residence, from 1936 until 2002. Remarkably, during this period of its history, the only plumbing fixtures installed as conveniences were a hand-operated water pump and an enameled cast-iron kitchen sink; neither indoor toilet facilities nor electricity were ever added. As a result, the building preserves, largely unaltered, both its exterior and interior fabric.

The West Brick School is one of 7 historic resources around the Commonwealth approved for nomination to the National Register of Historic Places by the Massachusetts Historical Commission at this meeting.

Secretary Galvin serves as Chairman of the 17-member board, which meets regularly and considers historic resources eligible for the National Register four times a year.

The National Register is the nation’s official listing of significant historic resources. In Massachusetts, there are over 70,000 properties listed in the National Register. The Massachusetts Historical Commission has been administering the National Register of Historic Places program in Massachusetts since 1966.

The Massachusetts Historical Commission is the office of the State Historic Preservation Officer and the State Archaeologist. It was established in 1963 to identify, evaluate, and protect important historical and archaeological assets of the Commonwealth. Visit our website to learn more about the Commission’s programs ([www.sec.state.ma.us/mhc](http://www.sec.state.ma.us/mhc)).

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